

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS, EASTERN DIVISION

Pablo Munoz, Jr. v. Dart Container Corporation of Illinois

Munoz · No. No. 25 CV 8707 · Decided February 18, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois denied Dart Container Corporation of Illinois’s motion to dismiss Pablo Munoz, Jr.’s Title VII claims for race discrimination, national origin discrimination, and retaliation. The court held that Munoz sufficiently exhausted his administrative remedies because his EEOC charge was reasonably related to the claims in his complaint. The court also held that the complaint plausibly alleged discriminatory treatment, a hostile work environment, and retaliation based on the close timing between Munoz’s complaint and termination.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Manish S. Shah
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
DECIDED	February 18, 2026
DOCKET	No. 25 CV 8707
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant moved to dismiss the complaint under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), arguing that plaintiff failed to exhaust administrative remedies and failed to state claims for Title VII race discrimination, national origin discrimination, and retaliation.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court accepts well-pleaded factual allegations as true, draws reasonable inferences in the nonmovant's favor, and asks whether the complaint contains sufficient factual matter to state a claim that is plausible on its face. An affirmative defense such as failure to exhaust may be resolved on a motion to dismiss when the defense is apparent from the complaint.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court memorandum opinion; persuasive value only.
PARTIES	Pablo Munoz, Jr. v. Dart Container Corporation of Illinois

TOPICS

title vii racial discrimination retaliation hostile work environment motions to dismiss

PRACTICE AREAS

employment law civil rights civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Munoz exhausted his administrative remedies where his July 2025 EEOC charge alleged discrimination, harassment, discipline, discharge, race discrimination, national-origin discrimination, and retaliation.
2. Whether the complaint plausibly stated Title VII race and national-origin discrimination claims.
3. Whether the complaint plausibly stated a Title VII retaliation claim based on Munoz's complaint about harassment and discrimination followed by his termination approximately one week later.

HOLDINGS

1. Munoz's Title VII claims were exhausted because the allegations in his complaint were included in, or were like or reasonably related to, the allegations in his EEOC charge.
2. The complaint plausibly stated race and national-origin discrimination claims because it alleged an adverse employment action and facts supporting an inference that race or national origin was a motivating factor.
3. The complaint plausibly stated a Title VII retaliation claim because Munoz alleged protected activity, an adverse employment action, and a causal connection supported by the close temporal proximity between his complaint and termination.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Munoz’s charge was sufficient to put the EEOC and Dart on notice of the conduct he was challenging. He has not failed to exhaust his administrative remedies.”

“Munoz has sufficiently pled that he was treated differently on account of his race and national origin.”

“He has sufficiently pled that he was retaliated against in violation of Title VII.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Munoz worked for Dart for more than nineteen years, including as a Level III maintenance mechanic, before Dart terminated him on September 18, 2024. He alleged that his supervisors harassed and discriminated against

him because he is Hispanic and Mexican, including disciplining him for conduct committed by white employees, and that he complained about the harassment and discrimination on September 12, 2024. Munoz filed EEOC charges in April and July 2025 alleging discrimination and retaliation and then sued under Title VII.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Munoz filed suit after receiving Notices of Right to Sue from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission concerning two charges of discrimination. Dart moved to dismiss. The district court denied the motion, concluding that the EEOC charge sufficiently exhausted the asserted claims and that the complaint plausibly stated claims under Title VII.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Kaminski v. Elite Staffing, Inc., 23 F.4th 774, 776–77 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- Brant v. Schneider National, Inc., 43 F.4th 656, 664 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Teal v. Potter, 559 F.3d 687, 691 (7th Cir. 2009)
- Massey v. Helman, 196 F.3d 727, 735 (7th Cir. 1999)
- Walker v. Thompson, 288 F.3d 1005, 1009 (7th Cir. 2002)
- Scroggin v. Universal Protective Service, LLC, 2025 WL 3493946, at *2 (7th Cir. Dec. 5, 2025)
- Geldon v. South Milwaukee School District, 414 F.3d 817, 820 (7th Cir. 2005)
- Rush v. McDonald's Corp., 966 F.2d 1104, 1108 (7th Cir. 1992)
- Millirons v. Illinois Department of Human Services, 2025 WL 2324263, at *3 (N.D. Ill. Aug. 12, 2025)
- Babrocky v. Jewel Food Co., 773 F.2d 857, 864 (7th Cir. 1985)
- Swierkiewicz v. Sorema N.A., 534 U.S. 506, 511 (2002)
- Tamayo v. Blagojevich, 526 F.3d 1074, 1083 (7th Cir. 2008)
- Luevano v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., 722 F.3d 1014, 1028–29 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Freeman v. Eaton Corp., 2024 WL 4200580, at *3 (7th Cir. Sept. 16, 2024)
- Porter v. City of Chicago, 700 F.3d 944, 954 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Sowers v. VVF Illinois Services, LLC, 2019 WL 1923407, at *2–3 (N.D. Ill. Apr. 30, 2019)
- Tomanovich v. City of Indianapolis, 457 F.3d 656, 663 (7th Cir. 2006)
- Lang v. Illinois Department of Children & Family Services, 361 F.3d 416, 419 (7th Cir. 2004)
- Riley v. City of Kokomo, 909 F.3d 182, 188 (7th Cir. 2018)